THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) There are differences of perception on the alignment of boundary between India and Nepal in some regions including the major difference in Narsahi and Susta regions in the West Champaran. In Susta region, shifting of course of Gandak river, the mid-stream of which formed the boundary as per Treaty of Sugauli, has resulted in claims and counterclaims by both sides. Preliminary survey of the area by Government indicates that some encroachment has been reported so far in case of adjacent area of Uttar Pradesh.

India and Nepal have established a Joint Technical Committee (JTC), with the objective of *inter alia* resolving the differences of perception on the alignment of boundary in various segments. The JTC is yet to complete its mandated tasks. Government has reiterated from time to time to His Majesty's Government of Nepal the need for an early resolution of the differences of perception and the need for maintaining status quo in these regions pending resolution of differences of perception. Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) has been deployed along the Indo-Nepal border and it has instructions to ensure that there are no encroachments on the Indian territory.

Vacant posts of officers in army

†3380. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of posts of officers in the army are lying vacant;

(b) if so, the comprehensive details thereof;

(c) the reasons of their lying vacant for last several years; and

(d) by when these vacancies will be filled by Government?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) 11256 (27%) posts are vacant in the rank of Lt. Col. and below as on 1st January, 2006. There is no shortage in the ranks of Col. and above.

(c) and (d) The main reason for shortage in the Army is non-availability of sufficient number of suitable candidates meeting Army's laid down criteria

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

for selection. To improve the situation, constant efforts are made to make Army an attractive career. Sustained image projection campaign through print and electronic media is also launched.

Vacancies in MoD

3381. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the backlog vacancies as on the 31st March, 2004 in his Ministry and its various Departments;

(b) whether special drive was carried out to fill in the above backlog vacancies;

(c) if so, number of vacancies filled in during the last two years, department-wise; and

(d) what are the backlog vacancies as on 31st March, 2006?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) A Special Recruitment Drive was conducted by the Ministry of Defence to fill up the backlog of vacancies as on 1st July, 2004 pertaining to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The number of such vacancies worked out as on 1st July, 2004 in the Ministry of Defence, including all its subordinate offices, was 6829.

As a result of the Special Recruitment Drive, 3321 vacancies were filled up by April, 2006. Department-wise details are as follows:—

Department	Number of vacancies filled in during the last two years
Department of Defence	2005
Department of Defence Production	1133
Defence Research & Development Organisation	183

The number of remaining backlog vacancies is 3508. Government takes steps from time to time to clear such backlog.